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RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 1584

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SUBJECT: UBCV PATRIARCH HOSPITALIZED

11. (SBU) Thich Vien Dinh, a senior member of the Unified Buddhist Church (UBCV) in HCMC confirmed Internet reporting that UBCV Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang was hospitalized on September 25 for a heart ailment and pneumonia. According to Thich Vien Dinh, at least one UBCV monk from HCMC was able to travel to Binh Dinh over the weekend to visit Quang in his pagoda before admission to the hospital. We also spoke with Thich Minh Tuan, the assistant to Thich Huyen Quang in central-coastal Binh Dinh province. He said that the Patriarch is being treated in the VIP area of the provincial hospital in Quy Nhon. His condition currently is stable and he is able to communicate.

#### Confusion over GVN Response

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12. (SBU) Thich Vien Dinh alleged that Quang had been ailing for a few days prior to his admission, but provincial officials refused to take Quang into the hospital, preferring to provide medical care at the Pagoda. However, Thich Minh Tuan told us that provincial officials responded promptly to his initial call for assistance; it was the Pagoda's decision -- based on recommendation of the attending physicians -- that Quang be treated at home. When Quang's condition did not improve, the hospital responded promptly to his request for admission and more intensive treatment.

13. (SBU) Thich Minh Tuan was not optimistic about the prognosis for the octogenarian UBCV leader. He suspects that Quang also is suffering from kidney and liver failure.

#### Police Reach Out to Quang?

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14. (SBU) Thich Vien Dinh also reported that on September 21, Hanoi-based Ministry of Public Security Standing Vice Minister Nguyen Khanh Toan visited Quang along with provincial MPS officials. According to Minh Tuan, the Vice Minister was visiting the province and decided to pay an impromptu "courtesy call" on the UBCV Patriarch. Minh Tuan did not provide details on the contents of the discussion.

WINNICK